

**City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, December 10, 2012**

Council President Francis G. Acosta called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Reverend Sandra Fees, from the First UU Church.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Acosta
Councilor Corcoran, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6
Managing Director C. Snyder
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Solicitor C. Younger
City Clerk L. Kelleher

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no proclamations or presentations issued at this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Acosta announced that there are two citizens registered to address Council on agenda matters and one citizen registered to address non-agenda matters this evening. Council President Acosta reminded the citizens registered to speak about the public speaking rules.

Craig Poole, of Wyomissing, stated that he represents the Crowne Plaza and he expressed the belief that the current economic conditions do not warrant the construction of a new hotel. He noted a recent study showing that hotels in Berks and Lehigh counties have a 50% occupancy rate. He stated that there are approximately 23 hotels in Berks County and approximately 200 hotels in Lehigh County. He noted the financial struggles of the Crowne Plaza. He stated that a hotel in Reading will not draw in more people; it will only draw people away from the existing area hotels.

Pastor Ramon Mendez, of North 8th Street, stated that his church is located at 18 N 8th Street,

on the lot where the hotel will be located. He stated that the impact the hotel will have on the church and the impact the church will have on the hotel are unknown. He noted that prior plans required the church to relocate; however, although the church has been at that location for centuries he is willing to consider relocating. He noted that he is open to dialog to ensure the success of the hotel.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Acosta called Council's attention to the minutes for the November 26th Regular Meeting of Council and the Special Meeting of November 28th and the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation under the Consent Agenda heading. He announced the need to add a resolution regarding the gifting of artwork to the Reading Public Museum to the Resolution section.

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to approve the minutes from the November 26th Regular Meeting and the November 28th Special Meeting and the agenda as amended, including the consent agenda legislation. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

A. Resolution 130-2012 – Herbein & Co external audit contract extension (**Auditor**)

B. Resolution 131-2012 – authorizing the submission of a Section 108 Loan for the hotel project in the 700 block of Penn Street (**Community Development**)

C. Resolution 132-2012 – settling the tax assessment for Carpenter Technology, 101 W Bern St (**Law**)

D. Award of Contract - to Burkey Construction for the Construction Manager for various City projects (**Purchasing**)

E. Award of Contract - to National Recovery Agency, 2491 Paxton Street, Harrisburg, PA for the collection of non-utility based delinquent fees for the City of Reading (**Purchasing**)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Council President Acosta noted the Mayor's absence and asked the City Clerk if the Mayor's report was received. The City Clerk stated that the report is attached to the agenda. Council President noted the receipt of the report.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting. In summary:

- Report on the General Fund balances between 1991 and 2011 - to date there is a \$19M

fund balance

- Report on the 2012 Ice and Snow Grant in the amount of \$54,000

Councilor Waltman inquired about the fund balance of \$8M at the end of 2011. The City Auditor stated that he would provide more detail on December 17th.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

A. Bill No. 107-2012 - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1 Administration and Government, Section 186 G Fiscal Provisions - 4.0 Preparing Requests for Proposals (RFP's) for contracts greater than \$10,000 eliminating the Managing Director's ability to waive the RFP process for professional services (**Council Staff**) *Introduced at the October 22 regular meeting; Tabled at the November 19 and November 26 regular meetings*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to table Bill No. 107-2012.

Bill No. 107-2012 was tabled by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7**

Nays: None -0

B. Bill No. 108-2012 - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1 Administration and Government, Section 186 G Fiscal Provisions by reducing the amount of expenditures and allocations requiring Council's approval from \$25,000 to zero (\$0) (**Council Staff**) *Introduced at the October 22 regular meeting; Tabled at the November 19 and November 26 regular meetings*

Councilor Corcoran moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to table Bill No. 108-2012.

Bill No. 108-2012 was tabled by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7**

Nays: None -0

C. Bill No. 121-2012 – amending the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act Recovery Plan for the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania (as filed with the City Clerk on May 28, 2010, and enacted into law under Bill No. 26 of 2010 on June 11, 2010) (**Law**) *Introduced at the November 13 special meeting*

Councilor Corcoran moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 121-2012.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this is the first phase of the Recovery Plan and that additional adjustments are needed to reflect the City's progress.

Councilor Waltman stated that this amendment is an initial bridge and that further corrections and modifications are required.

Council President Acosta noted that Mr. Solivan has accepted a position with the Philadelphia Housing Authority. He stated that Mr. Solivan's assistance was helpful and that he will be missed.

Bill No. 121-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President -7

Nays: None -0

D. Bill No. 122-2012 – Reading Phillies Lease Extension (**Law**) *Introduced at the November 19 regular meeting*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 122-2012.

Managing Director Snyder stated that this ordinance will extend the lease term beyond the financing package for the stadium improvement project and will eliminate the City's balloon payment. She stated that the new terms will save the City approximately \$4.8M over a 25 year period and cover the cost of the stadium improvement.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz and Councilor Sterner thanked the Managing Director for her work to protect the interests of the City and Reading Baseballtown.

Bill No. 122-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President -7

Nays: None -0

E. Bill No. 123-2012- amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, Fee Schedule, to reflect new rates for Rental Housing Inspections (**Business Analyst/Council Staff**) *Introduced at the November 19 regular meeting*

Councilor Corcoran moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 123-2012.

Councilor Corcoran thanked all who worked to revise this fee schedule which now will

penalize rental properties that do not comply with the City's Property Maintenance regulations, rather than landlords with properties that do comply with the regulations..

Councilor Waltman noted Council's work over the past 10 years to refine and revise the housing processes. He noted that approximately 10 years ago a landlord could run a rental property by paying only a housing permit fee. He described the process improvements that identified unpermitted rental properties and improved the inspection process.

Bill No. 123-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7**

Nays: None -0

F. Bill No. 124-2012 – amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, Fee Schedule to reflect new Health Permit fees (**Business Analyst/Council Staff**) *Introduced at the November 19 regular meeting*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to enact Bill No. 124-2012.

Council President Acosta described the long process to review and refine the health permitting process. He thanked Mr. Kersley and Ms. Katzenmoyer for their hard work to correct the Health Permit fees and process.

G. Bill No. 125-2012 - Amending the Codified Ordinances Chapter 10 Health and Safety by, Part 4, Certificate of Transfer, by redefining property to incorporate all real estate including a lot and providing a definition for a lot (**Law**) *Introduced at the November 26 regular meeting*

Councilor Corcoran moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 125-2012.

Bill No. 125-2012 was enacted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7**

Nays: None -0

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

No ordinances were introduced at this meeting.

Pending Legislation

Ordinance - establishing the employee positions for the City of Reading for the fiscal year 2013

(Law) *Introduced at the November 28 special meeting; eligible for enactment at the December 17 meeting*

Ordinance - amending the 2012 City of Reading general fund budget by authorizing the transfer of funds from the Department of Public Works maintain/repair street lights line item to the Department of Public Works contracted services line item for the renewal of traffic signal maintenance contract with Telco **(Council Staff)** *Introduced at the November 28 special meeting; eligible for enactment at the December 17 meeting*

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 133-2012 – reappointing Mary Wolfe to the Blighted Property Review Committee **(Nom & Appts)**

Resolution 134-2012 – appointing William Sands to the Historical Architectural Review Board **(Nom & Appts)**

Resolution 135-2012 – reappointing Geoffrey Litwin to the Electrician’s Examining Board **(Nom & Appts)**

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to adopt Resolutions 133-135-2012.

Councilors Marmarou, Reed and Corcoran noted the skills and talent of those being appointed and reappointed as volunteers to these Boards and Committees.

Resolutions No. 133-135-2012 were adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7
Nays: None -0**

Resolution 136-2012 – authorizing the gifting of artwork to the Reading Public Museum **(Law)**

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution 136-2012.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that this same result could have taken a much shorter path. She noted the City’s good fortune to have assets such as these that can be donated to the Museum. She stated that these assets are valuable from a historical and community perspective.

Councilor Reed suggested that the City Auditor begin an asset audit that will identify and

value all other City assets.

Resolution No. 136-2012 was adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta,
President -7**

Nays: None -0

PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL MATTERS

Council President Acosta stated that there is one citizen registered to address Council on non-agenda matters. He reminded the citizen of the public speaking rules.

Kevin Jroski, of Meade Street, stated that he recently purchased a City home and questioned the need to pay a recycling bill when he does not participate in the program. He stated that continual increase of City taxes and fees will drive residents away from the City. He noted that as taxes and fees increase people vote with their feet as they move to suburban neighborhoods.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Sterner agreed with the strain placed on Reading residents as they shoulder increasing fees and taxes, as stated by Mr. Jroski. He encouraged people to visit the Hillside Holiday Light display which is open through the holiday season. He also thanked those who addressed Council this evening.

Councilor Marmarou stated that the College Heights Holiday Party on December 9th was a success and well attended. He reminded residents to attend the December 12th Zoning Hearing Board meeting to oppose the application for a personal care home by the Villa at St. Elizabeth's.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the recent repeated appearances of Santa around East Reading. She also announced the New Year's celebration planned at the Pagoda, which will conclude with fireworks.

Councilor Waltman congratulated the Centre Park Historic District for their annual Holiday House Tour and noted the value of the Artifact's Bank to historic preservation. He thanked the City for their continued support of the Centre Park Historic District.

Councilor Waltman stated that he empathizes with the feelings of the taxpayers regarding increases to rates and fees; however, he noted the need for all to recognize the reality of Reading's situation. He expressed the belief that the financing of the hotel is a good mix of investment and loaned funding. He noted his optimism for this project.

Councilor Reed stated that approximately 500 people took the Centre Park Holiday House tour on December 9th. She also noted that the brunch packages, which accompanied the house tour, were sold out at Adrienne's Bed and Breakfast. She stated that this was a positive experience for all who attended.

Council President Acosta agreed with the success of the Centre Park House Tour. He expressed the belief that the hotel project will be of benefit to Reading and Reading's visitors.

Council President Acosta described the meeting that took place with Senator Schwank and Representative Caltagirone this morning to plan the Crime Summit for January 18, 2013. Local, State and Federal officials will be invited.

Council President Acosta announced the upcoming meeting schedule.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk